

Socialist Worker

(01) 8722682 <http://www.swp.ie> swp@clubi.ie

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**END THE
OCCUPATIONS
OF IRAQ & PALESTINE**

US Military Out of Shannon

**Global Day of Action
DEMONSTRATION**

**Saturday September 27th
Dublin Parnell Square, 2pm
Belfast: Art College, 2pm**

Get these occupiers out of Iraq!



THE US occupation has turned into a brutal mess. Almost every day a US soldier is killed. In return, Iraqi civilians pay the price with their lives.

The bombing of the UN headquarters has sent out a terrible message.

As Robert Fisk puts it, 'it proves that no foreign organisation—no NGO, no humanitarian organisation, no investor, no businessman—can ex-

pect to be safe under America's occupation rule.'

The US is spending \$1 billion a week in Iraq. It hoped to pay for this by selling off the country's oil. However, the growing resistance movement has scuppered that by sabotage.

US Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, had originally boasted of a 'revolution in military affairs'. The US army was supposed to be able to move fast, with light forces, on hit and run

missions against its enemies.

But it is finding that it does not have enough troops to enforce its occupation.

So it is desperately turning to its allies for help. 'We do need and welcome foreign troops and there will be more foreign troops in Iraq' Bush has said.

The US regime is pressuring its new found allies in the right wing Hindu fundamentalist government of India to send 16,000 troops, for

example. Its pretext is that 'foreign terrorists' are flooding into Iraq.

They are — but they are dressed in the officer fatigues of the US army.

Vandalised

These foreign terrorists caused the deaths of at least 8,000 civilians and as many as 30,000 Iraqi troops, mainly conscripted teenagers.

They have vandalised a highly developed society.

Doctor Geert van Moorter, of Medicine for the Third World,

describes what he saw in Iraq in July and August.

'The Iraqis just can't understand why it is, four months after the official end of the conflict, they still have electricity for only a few hours a day.

'There are huge problems with drinking water. Fuel supply is seriously disrupted.

'Most public services and ministries have stopped functioning'.

Hundreds of thousands of public sector employees have lost their jobs because the

US authorities want to turn Iraq into an experiment in neo-liberalism.

According to UNICEF, about eight per cent of Iraqi children are now suffering extreme malnutrition.

Iraq can only start to recover when 'foreign' terrorist elements are removed.

This is why everyone should start preparing now for the massive demonstrations against the occupation of Iraq on September 27th in Dublin and Belfast.

FAS workers on hunger strike

DOZENS of job scheme workers are staging a 24-hour hunger strike outside the GPO in Dublin's O'Connell St.

The workers from the north inner city have been devastated by decision to slash Job Initiative places.

These schemes have been designed for people over 35 who have been unemployed for more than five years.

They get paid 297 euros a week to do valuable community work.

They are employed as school caretakers, security men, and mini-bus drivers who provide meals for the elderly.

The workers had been kept on six-month contracts and had hoped to be given full-time jobs.

But now they are victims of a nasty hatchet job inspired by Mary Harney who wants to turn Ireland into a Thatcherite paradise.

Work until you are 67

THE government is planning a new move to force public sector workers to stay at work until they are 67.

It also wants the special exemption for some workers such as prison officers who retire at 60 to be removed.

Its aim is to suck the union leaders into a 'compromise' on this so that they will recommend it to their members.

However, why should workers in an increasingly productive economy have to work longer if they do not want to.

The World Bank has already advocated that people be forced to work a staggering ten years longer.

If the Irish government gets away with this move, they will keep pushing up the retirement age. We need to stop them now.

US war planes in Shannon: They are still there

SHANNON is becoming a permanent military base for US warplanes.

Over 600 hundred aircraft – 400 civilian and 200 military aircraft have been granted permission to land in the Irish airport this year, even though they were assisting the US war and subsequent occupation of Iraq.

On top of this, 2,100 military aircraft have been given permission to fly over Irish airspace.

These shocking figures show that there is no reduction of US warplanes since the fall of Baghdad in May.

Occupation

On average over 11 military or arms-carrying flights a day pass through Irish air space and two land here.

Yet the law of the land says that the military aircraft should only land or over fly Ireland when they are not part of any military occupation.

The Irish government is flagrantly breaking its own law. It first of all tried to cover up what was happening.

Then it claimed that US warplanes could use Shannon because there was an immediate and direct threat from Saddam Hussein.

Even more reason to turn 27th September into a mass demonstration against the illegal activities of this government.



■ Permission granted for war planes

Private armies to fight in dirty wars

A RECENT advert placed in the British newspaper the Western Mail offered 'excellent pay' for former soldiers 'wanted for security work in Iraq'.

The ad was placed by the US firm Secureforce. The death of a private 'security operative' in Iraq last weekend has highlighted the extent to which mercenaries are already being used in war zones.

The US government has hired mercenary companies like ICI of

Oregon, TASK International and PAE to fight in civil wars in Africa and South America.

The mercenaries are used to fight in dirty wars, when the US wants to lend its support but does not want to be held accountable or risk the political backlash that could come with US troop casualties.

ICI of Oregon sent mercenaries, paid for by the US government, to Liberia in the mid-90s as the country was being torn apart by civil war. The company was given the

'Contractor of the Year' award after its private army protected the US embassy, which came under attack during the conflict.

Mercenaries are also fighting alongside the Colombian army. The US has given \$2.5bn of military aid to help the Colombian government pay for its war against guerrilla groups operating in the country.

Much of the money has been used to fund mercenaries who operate the military equipment provided by the US.

Why did this baby die?

The tragic death of a 29 day old Nigerian baby in Waterford has led to a wave of racist abuse.

A Dr Matt McHugh, who wrote a medical paper on circumcision more than 22 years ago, was featured in many newspaper demanding that non-nationals be 'educated' on the issue.

Yet circumcision is a practice that has been carried out in Jews, Muslims and other religious groups for centuries.

The real issue is the failure of the South-Eastern Health Board to provide circumcisions for religious or cultural reasons.

Male circumcision is commonplace in sub-Saharan Africa, principally for Muslims but also for many Christian communities for cultural reasons.

Tradition

Yet, despite the growing numbers of Africans settling in Ireland, only one hospital in the state, Temple Street National Children's Hospital, provides circumcision for non-medical reasons, despite calls going back several years for this tradition to be respected and for the health service to provide the procedure.

This lack of service has forced many families to turn to untrained individuals to circumcise their sons, resulting in the death of Callis Osaghae from blood loss following a botched circumcision.

The baby was rushed to Waterford Regional Hospital but was unable to be saved.

The incident also highlighted the fact that the South Eastern Health Board, which covers a population of 400,000 people, does not have a paediatric surgical service for children under two and does not operate on such children except in life-threatening situations.

McDonalds uses GAA to catch the kids

THE GAA has done a deal with McDonalds to sponsor a special programme aimed at young people.

The Catch and Kick programme was launched last March but it is only now emerging that it is sponsored by McDonalds.

McDonalds operates a catch-them-young philosophy to trap people into eating their unhealthy food.

Scientists have discovered that high doses of fat and sugar in fast and processed foods can be as addictive as nicotine.

The addictive nature of fatty foods has been established by researchers at Rockefeller University in New York who found that regularly eating the products could quickly reconfigure the body's hormonal system to want yet more fat.

In France, fears of a consumer backlash have prompted McDonalds to publish nutritional advice that inactive children should not eat its meals more than once a week.

Yet despite this overwhelming evidence the GAA is creating new openings for McDonalds to trap young people.



Privatisation=inefficiency

FIFTY million people in America were affected by a power cut in the US in August.

The reason: lack of investment by privatised power companies. The North American Electric Reliability Council, which monitors the grid, had warned that the system required billions of dollars of investment to be brought up to scratch.

The notoriously incompetent firm National Grid of England was recently allowed to buy Niagara Mowak and relieve them of their obligation to invest in the grid. They got rid of 800 workers and gave shareholders NiMo, as they are known, a \$90 million bonus.

The Irish government is determined to introduce these disasters here. After 2005, the ESB is to be fully de-regulated.

In order to attract the fat cats, electricity prices are being pushed up. They are set to rise by another 6 percent this year, following a 13 percent rise later in the year.

Cullen wants more corporate power

MINISTER for the Environment, Martin Cullen is attempting to push through new legislation removing the cap on corporate donations to political parties.

Fianna Fail, who are €1.5 million in debt, would be the party that would benefit most from increased corporate donations.

Cullen managed to raise €35,000 in election donations last year, nearly twice

as much as any other politician and almost 12 percent of the entire amount donated to the hundreds of Fianna Fail politicians who ran in the election.

Responsible

Prominent amongst the names donating to Cullen were McNerney and Frisby Construction, the two biggest house-building firms in the south-east who saw the man now responsible for housing as a sound investment.

Noel Frisby in particu-



■ More cash for Martin Cullen

lar is a well-known tax cheat and had to pay £1.8 million to the Revenue Commissioners in arrears, interest and penalties in 2001.

editorial

*GET THE U.S. AND BRITISH TROOPS OUT***No U.N.
cover for
Bush**

■ Bush: "These guys will do!"

THE BUSH regime is in trouble in Iraq. US army morale is at rock bottom. Bush's poll rating are at their lowest since 11th September.

The US does not have enough troops to crush the growing Iraqi resistance.

Their answer is to turn to the UN for a resolution that will legitimise more foreign troops joining the occupation.

The haggling has already begun. The US and Britain want to keep overall command and just give the UN a 'vital role'.

The French, German and Russians don't agree and want a UN mandated mission instead. Even Kofi Annan has said that the UN will not engage in 'just burden-sharing but also (wants) sharing of decisions and responsibility'.

Behind the squabble, are deeper imperialist rivalries. US corporations have taken almost all the contracts to 'rebuild' Iraq and the US has used the occupation to establish itself as the sole powerbroker in the Middle East. The EU, for example, has virtually abandoned attempts to influence the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

France, Germany and Russia may be willing to co-operate with the US—but only after they extract their share of the plunder.

Movement

The anti-war movement, however, should not fall for the trap about greater UN involvement in stabilising the occupation.

On no account should we allow Irish troops to be sent to Iraq—under the guise of a UN resolution. In a deliberate kite-flying exercise, like Skelton, a senior Democratic congressman on the Armed Services Committee of the US Congress, has suggested that Ireland contribute troops. The government has not repudiated the suggestion.

But why should a country, which had one of the highest numbers per head of population marching against war on 15th February, contribute to the occupation of Iraq?

Even Skelton has conceded that the original prediction of a two-year occupation 'is extremely optimistic' and has suggested a 50-year occupation!

Bush revealed the real purpose for more foreign troops when he said that 'They will help to free up our hunter teams'. The only solution to Iraq's

misery is an immediate withdrawal of the colonial armies. There should be no excuses about Iraq being 'ungovernable' or people 'needing time to learn

democracy'.

These were the same old excuses used to colonise India and Ireland in the past. They should just get out.

Who runs Iraq today?

UNDER US pressure, the UN Security Council has already 'welcomed' the formation of the Iraqi Governing Council. It is a first step towards full recognition of the puppet regime.

Real power in Iraq lies with the Coalition Provisional Authority which is run by the US supremo Paul Bremer. It has taken over Saddam Hussein's Jumhriyya Palace and is just as inaccessible as the former dictator.

The new governing council is made up of 25 members who have been hand-picked by the US. They include Ahmad Chalabi of the Iraqi National Congress who has more support in the Pentagon than in Iraq.

Its discussions are entirely secret. Its main decision so far has been to proclaim 9th April—the date Baghdad fell—as Iraq's national holiday. The news fell flat in Iraq and crowds instead marked 14th July—the date when the 1958 monarchy fell.

The IGC operates behind a building surrounded by US checkpoints and barbed wire. It has acquired a 120-man Personal Security Detail whose members receive salaries of \$4,000 a

month—ten times the wages of senior Iraqi bureaucrats.

Like all colonial rulers, the US have deliberately

introduced a sectarian element into the composition of the IGC.

Fourteen IGC members are Shi'ite from overtly

communal parties and five are Kurds. The aim is to discriminate against the Sunnis and prepare the way for the 'Lebanonisation' of Iraq.

Bring us home now

'SOMEWHERE down the line, we became an occupation force in Iraqi eyes. We don't feel like heroes any more'.

This was the message from Private Isaac Kindblade of the 671st Engineer Company.

His was one of the 500 emails a day that was sent to a 'Bring Our Troops Home' website established by former Vietnam Vet, David Hackworth.

The new medium, which did not exist during the Vietnam war, has become an important channel for soldier discontent.

US troops who were told they would be home in months, are demoralised by the 120 degree sweltering heat, the packaged meals they have been eating for months and the two litre a day water ration.

Now they face losing 'the imminent danger pay' and the

family separation allowance because of public sector cuts.

Groups like the Military

Families Speak Out, which wants US troops brought home, are springing up all over America..

Baghdad's brutal prison

OVER 3,000 Iraqi prisoners are being held in a brutal detention centre, known as Camp Cropper.

They sleep 80 to a tent on wafer-thin mats. They are given a shovel to dig their own latrine.

Despite being overwhelming Muslim, they are forced to eat pork. For any infringement of the rules, they are forced to sit in painful positions and their heads are covered with a sack.

'Add to sleep deprivation and physical abuse and you have highly degrading conditions which are tantamount to torture and gross abuse of human rights' said Curt Goering, deputy director of Amnesty International.

Amnesty has also received 'credible report' of detainees who died in custody 'mostly as a result of shooting by members of coalition forces'.

**OCCUPATION WATCH
No Ethics?
No Problem**

THE US company WorldCom is poised to land the \$900 million Pentagon contract to build a mobile phone network for occupied Iraq.

This follows the shutting down of its Bahrain-based competitor, Batelco, and a threat to confiscate the \$5 million of equipment it had laid.

WorldCom ranks equal with Enron in the annals of company fraud. It was involved in a \$11 billion accountancy scam and has been denounced by one US senator for showing 'a flagrant lack of ethics'.

But that is no problem when dealing with an occupied country.

**END THE
OCCUPATIONS OF
IRAQ & PALESTINE
US MILITARY OUT
OF SHANNON
DEMONSTRATE**

*** DUBLIN: Saturday 27th September, Assemble: Garden of Remembrance Parnell Square 2pm**

*** BELFAST: Saturday 27th September, Assemble: Art College 2pm**

IRAQI LABOUR LEADERS ARRESTED

RESISTANCE to the occupation does not always take the form of armed resistance.

On 2nd August, Qasim Hadi and fifty-four other Iraqi members of the Union of the Unemployed

in Iraq had been engaged in a five-day sit-in over the treatment of the unemployed.

They were also protesting that US companies were grabbing all the contracts to rebuild Iraq.

The US army broke up

the protest and detained the workers.

They were only released after a wave of condemnation from groups such as US Labour against War and the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions.

comment

Eamonn
McCann

Speaking up for the Irish people

THE Real IRA took a hammering in the media over the murder of Danny McGurk on the Lower Falls on August 17th. And not just in the media. The 35-year-old father of six was shot five times, once in the back, and left for dead in his Ross Street home.

His wife, Patsy, who had watched horrified as the three Real IRA men ran into their house waving their guns on a summer Sunday morning, said: "They have left my children without a father and me without a husband. I wouldn't wish this on anyone."

Danny McGurk's "crime" was that he'd had a fierce row with members of the Real IRA over claims that he'd behaved in a socially unacceptable way. The Real IRA had assumed authority as arbiters of what was acceptable. The bottom line was that Danny McGurk had challenged their authority in the matter and so had to die.

Pretends

Similarly, the Provisional IRA murdered father-of-four Andrew Kearney over a personal grudge in the New Lodge in July 1998. He was held down, shot three times and left lying in a lift-well. The Provos tore out the 'phone so that help couldn't be called.

In any rational system of political morality, there is no difference in the nature of the two killings. And the same goes for the Provisional IRA murder of Real IRA man Joe O'Connor in west Belfast in October 2000.

Ritually, Sinn Fein leaders put out expressions of regret at the O'Connor and Kearney killings. But the moral rhetoric is revved up to the max when it comes to killings like Danny McGurk's. It's demanded that the Real IRA disband, "get off the people's backs" etc. Language which no Sinn Feiner would use in any circumstances about the Provisional IRA.

As the writer and former Republican prisoner Anthony McIntyre commented, it wasn't the nature of the act which made the Danny McGurk murder morally reprehensible to Sinn Fein. "His killers only lack(ed) justification because they were members of the wrong IRA."

Support

This raises the question of what it is about Republicans which leads them to believe that the particular paramilitary group they support has a right to kill people who challenge its authority.

In terms of the Republican tradition as expressed over the past 30 years, it goes back to the "mandate" of 1916 and the notion of the "army" as the legitimate representative of the will of the Irish people. If you believe that the Provisional IRA embodies this will, then their killings, however much to be regretted in particular cases, are acceptable, carried out in the line of patriotic duty.

Likewise for the Real IRA if you believe that they have now assumed will-of-the-people status. The size and credibility of the organisations may be different, but the principle is the same.

This is a principle which socialists must challenge head-on. From the point of view of the tradition of which the SWP is part, the problem isn't the circumstances of a particular killing, but the whole business of any group operating clandestinely on behalf or in the name of "the people". Start down that road and you can end up in the realm of mystical, even sinister, nationalism.

In August, the IRSP denounced the Housing Executive for the demolition of a plinth on which the party had intended to erect a monument to two INLA members killed in Dungannon in August 1983.

The press statement asked: "Was the Good Friday Agreement not meant to enshrine the rights of the indigenous Irish to their own cultural identity?" The two young men, Brendan Convery and Gerald Mallon, may have been sent out by their INLA bosses, but, to the IRSP, were actually carrying a mandate from "the indigenous Irish."

No socialist movement can be built other than in sharp opposition to notions of that sort, whatever organisation they happen to be expressed through.

Double standards on Peter McBride



■ Scots Guards Mark Wright and James Fisher (left) convicted of the murder of Peter McBride (right)

NORTHERN Ireland Office Minister John Spellar is supposed to be in charge of human rights.

But co-incidentally, he also sat on a British Army Board three years where he agreed, citing 'exceptional cir-

cumstances', that Scots Guards Mark Wright and James Fisher should remain in the army.

Wright and Fisher had been convicted of the murder of a Belfast teenager Peter McBride.

On September 4 1992, he had been stopped by a foot patrol of the Scots Guards off the New

Lodge Road in Belfast. After an identity check and a body search, which found him unarmed, Peter ran from then patrol.

Chased

He was chased, however, but the soldier in charge shouted 'don't shoot'.

Despite this, a cry

went out of 'shoot the bastard' and Guardsmen Mark Wright and Jim Fisher shot him in the back at a 70-yard range.

In a subsequent trial, Lord Chief Justice Kelly ruled out a defence that the soldiers thought that the deceased had been carrying a coffee jar bomb.

He stated 'this is not a

panic situation which required a split second action or indeed any action at all'

2,000 people have been dismissed from the British army since 1992. They include soldiers who were caught for minor drugs offences and more recently an officer who was cheating on a television quiz show.

Yet these two Scots Guardsmen were returned to their regiment and one was subsequently promoted.

The two soldiers were even sent to Kosovo as peacekeepers!

Since his arrival in Northern Ireland, John Spellar has refused to give interviews on the issue.

Pretends

He pretends it is a purely 'internal army issue' even though he played a major role in the decision to keep the soldiers in their regiment.

Only two other British soldiers, Private Lee Clegg and Ian Thain were ever convicted for murder in Northern Ireland. Strangely enough, they too were allowed to stay in the army.

We can only conclude that British Army considers it a more serious offence to be caught cheating on quiz shows than to be found guilty in their own court of murdering a civilian in Northern Ireland.

And these are the armed forces that are now bringing freedom to Basra!

Water: We won't pay

THE advertisement from the Department of Regional Development for the job of chief executive for the Water Service, which appeared at the start of August, said a lot about the 'consultation' which has just taken place.

The advert offered a salary of £150,000 pa, plus a 'performance-related bonus.'

This is over ten times what the average Water Service worker earns.

The pay scale for a manual worker in the Service ranges from £11,500 to £13,000 a year.

The advert said 'The Water Service must become a self-financing organisation outside central government.'

It continued: 'A major consultation exercise is in progress to determine the basis for this fundamental change which will require the introduction of domestic water and sewerage charges.'

Question

Funny, we thought the question of whether the service should be taken outside central government was among the matters people were being consulted about.

The advert confirmed what most people at 'consultation

meetings' suspected—that it was all a charade.

There was never any intention to take a blind bit of notice of what citizens had to say.

Interestingly, the job advert had been placed in the papers by Veredus Executive Resourcing—a component of an outfit called Capita.

This company is one of the biggest wheels on the privatisation wagon set in motion in the 1980s by the Thatcher government.

Trade union journals, reflecting the experience of union members, routinely refer to it as 'Crapita.'

The job advert also made clear that who-

ever lands the job will have to preside over the introduction of 'the organisational and cultural changes needed to effect (the) proposals.'

Relied

This is another way of saying that the Water Service needs a hatchet man, or woman, who can be relied on to cut jobs, put the boot into the unions and force people to pay double for their water.

It's time for every person in the North who believes that our world should not be for sale to get organised and resist whatever the fat cat who gets this job tries to do!

Brazil's workers fight Lula's attacks on pension rights

TENS OF thousands of public sector workers marched through Brasilia, the Brazilian capital, in August in the sharpest clash yet between workers and the country's president, Lula.

Lula, a former trade union leader, became president in January on the basis of massive support from the country's workers and poor.

It was a historic victory for the leader of the Workers Party (PT).

Lula had helped found the party during mass strikes against a military dictatorship in the 1970s.

But since coming to office Lula has pursued neo-liberal economic and social policies increasingly indistinguishable from those of his right-wing predecessor, Fernando Henrique Cardoso.

To add to the bitterness of PT supporters, Lula has continued with the economic policies implemented by his predecessor, carrying out even steeper cuts in public spending than demanded by the IMF and keeping interest rates high.

Lula's government even appointed bankers to get involved in running the economy.

Henrique Meirelles, who headed the international bank Bank-Boston, was appointed governor of the Central Bank.

On the demonstration protesters carried pictures of Lula and Cardoso together and the slogan 'Down with neo-liberalism'.

Deceived

One marcher, civil servant Alejandra Maria Rossi, told journalists, 'I voted for Lula with the illusion that the country would change and workers would be respected. But I was deceived.'

Alongside the feeling of betrayal, though, the hopes raised among ordinary Brazilians by Lula's election have begun to translate into struggles against the direction of his government.

As well as the public sector workers' protests, there has also been a new wave of struggles by the important MST landless rural labourers' movement and the MTST shantytown dwellers movement.

August's public sector workers' protest came as the government sought to push a 'reform' to public sector workers' pension plans through Brazil's national parliament.

Up to 60,000 workers travelled from across the vast country to march through Brasilia.

Hundreds of thousands had also joined strikes over the weeks leading up to the march.

The pension 'reform' closely echoes those being pushed by governments in Europe, such as that behind the mass strikes in France earlier this year.

Lula's pension plan would make public sector workers work longer, and pay more for poorer pensions—and open up the way

86 percent of the owners of the 1,000 largest companies in Brazil approve of Lula's management

for moves to them being forced to pay into private pension schemes.

Brazil's CNUG public sector workers' union says the government's plan is to please 'financial capital, speculators, loan sharks and large estate owners.'

The anger among those who had voted for Lula was clear on the march when some protesters invaded the parliament, smashing windows and mobbing government deputies.

Lula's response was to defend his 'reform' plan, saying, 'Brazil will be grateful for a government with a commitment to reforms.'

He even attacked previous right-wing governments for 'not having the courage' to stand up to protests.

While disappointing the workers and poor who voted for him, Lula now enjoys the support of most top business figures in Brazil.

A May survey among the owners of the 1,000 largest companies in Brazil revealed that 72 percent approved of Lula's management.

The figure rose to 86 percent at the beginning of June.

Even US president George Bush recently said of Lula, 'I like this guy!' But increasing numbers of Brazilians share the feelings

Police evict the homeless

THE MST landless rural workers' movement has stepped up its campaign of land occupations in the face of the government's failure to deliver on its pledge of significant land reform.

And there has been a spate of protests demanding land and funding for decent housing by the MST shantytown dwellers movement.

Last week MST protesters were forced by police to leave an occupation of land left vacant by the Volkswagen car multinational near Sao Paulo after it shut down some of its operations.



■ Strikers carry a coffin of Lula: 'He is dead to us!'

of Fatima Mesquita, a 50 year old civil servant who travelled over 1,200 miles to join August's demonstration.

She told journalists that Lula's government represented 'the biggest treachery I have had in my life.'

'I could never have imagined this. Lula came to my city and said he would recover the dignity of public sector workers.'

Many working class Brazilians would also have been stunned by Lula's declaration of three days of official mourning recently after the death of the head of the

country's biggest media empire.

Roberto Marinho was the right wing billionaire head of the Globo network, which has a vice-like grip on Brazil's media from TV to newspapers.

Battled

He was also a longtime and enthusiastic supporter of the military dictatorship against which Lula and the Workers Party battled in the 1970s and early 1980s.

Lula managed to get his pension reform through the

lower house of parliament and it now goes to the upper house.

The plan only got enough votes to carry with the support of the parties which formed the backbone of the previous right-wing government.

Three Workers Party deputies voted against the pension plans. They now face expulsion from the party.

This move indicates the Workers Party leadership's increasing war against those who oppose the right-wing direction of the government.

EGYPT:

Activists need our support

AFTER 111 days in detention, ten of them on hunger strike, Egyptian anti-war activist Ashraf Ibrahim was finally charged on 7 August.

Alongside four other activists—Nasser Farouq, Yehia Fakry, Mustafa El Basiony and Remoan Edward Gendi—he stands accused of forming an illegal left wing organisation.

The prosecution represents a worrying new development for anti-war activists in Egypt.

Like tens of thousands of others, Ashraf took part in the massive anti-war demonstrations of 20 and 21 March in Cairo.

When they arrested him on 19 April, state security officers seized video footage of those protests, which ended in brutal repression and mass arrests.

The five activists are also accused of 'damaging the prestige and status of the state' by contacting international human rights organisations.

Ashraf and his co-defendants are the only anti-war activists charged with serious offences.

Under Egypt's emergency laws they could face years in prison if convicted.

The activists' defence campaign believes that the case is politically motivated. A statement signed by 21 civil society groups says that the prosecutors' aim is 'to send a threatening message to political activists and groups in Egypt'. Egyptian activists need the support of our movement.

What you can do:

■ Write, e-mail or phone the Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak, the Public Prosecutor and the Egyptian Ambassador.

■ Write to your TD and ask him or her to protest at this abuse of anti-war activists.

Send messages of support from your trade union branch or community group to office@stopwar.org.uk and they will forward them to Ashraf Ibrahim's defence campaign.

■ Write to:

□ His Excellency Mohammad Hosni Mubarak, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 'Abedine Palace, Cairo, Egypt. webmaster@presidency.gov.eg

□ Counsellor Maher 'Abd al-Wahid, Public Prosecutor, Dar al-Qadha al-'Ali, Ramses Street, Cairo, Egypt.

□ His Excellency Mr Adel El Gazzar, Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 26 South Street London W1Y 6DD.

ARGENTINA:

Murderers lose immunity

AFTER years of campaigning, relatives of Argentina's 'disappeared' scored an important victory last month.

In 1976 a military coup installed a murderous dictatorship.

Up to 30,000 opponents of the regime were murdered or simply disappeared in the years of the military dictatorship. Others faced torture.

The junta fell in 1983 but the new government pardoned the coup leaders and gave an amnesty to the army officers responsible for the murders.

Since then families of the disappeared have protested and demanded justice.

Finally the government began to take steps to remove immunity and lift the ban on extradition for those responsible for the murders.

As the parliament debated the new law, thousands of demonstrators supporting the end of the immunity gathered outside—pictures of some of the disappeared were attached to railings outside the building.

Carlos Lordkipanidse was a survivor. Held for 30 months in a concentration camp he was tortured with electric shocks along with his baby son. He got away and fled the country.

He described the period to reporters by showing photos of helmeted soldiers forcing captives to their knees. 'These are pictures of American and British military in Iraq', he said. Other pictures showed prisoners in the US camp in Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. 'This is what it was like!'



■ Families of the 'disappeared' demonstrate outside the parliament

The missing Magdalen sisters

'I am shocked that the lies are still going on. The nuns said that the Magdalen women were laid to rest in a respectful public ceremony. That is not what happened'
Blathnaid Ni Chinneide of the Magdalen Memorial Committee told Socialist Worker

In 1993, the bodies of 154 Magdalen Laundry women were exhumed from a convent of the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity in High Park Drumcondra and cremated in Glasnevin Cemetery.

Bodies from all over Ireland's Magdalen Laundries had been brought to this special burial place.

The nuns had gambled on the stock exchange and lost, so they needed money.

They sold off the burial ground in Drumcondra to property developers for around a million pounds.

Blathnaid Ni Chinneide and Margo Kelly were shocked that the resting places of women, who had suffered so much, was being treated with disrespect.

They called together a meeting in Dublin's Ormond Hotel to protest.

'We expected 40 or so people to attend but hundreds arrived. People just wanted to tell their own stories.

'The Magdalen laundries were places where women who got pregnant outside marriage were sent. Or even girls who were at risk of getting pregnant. They might have been seen dancing at the cross roads and the parish priest would call to their house and suggest they move to a new job in the city. Only later would it emerge that they were interned in the Magdalen institution.'

'We felt that a memorial should be built not just for the women of High Park but for the thousands of women who had been sent to these institutions of social control.'

'Someone at the meeting stood up to tell how they had found out how their grandmother had been sent there. They tried to meet her, left their names to be contacted but only found out several months later that she had died. Hers was the only body to be handed back directly to her relatives.'

'We set up a committee and gathered petitions. We eventually met the Mother Superior of the order who took us around



■ Smiles for the camera but the reality was 'an ocean of sorrow'

the convent. There were still Magdalen women there even then. They were known as Magdalen this or Magdalen that. The women were encouraged to forget their real names.'

'In one room we saw an old woman in a black robe who sat silently holding a rag doll. She did not answer or speak. Later one of the nuns told us that

she must have been one of the women who had a baby'.

'We asked the nuns to tell us when the re-burial would take place. We rang up Glasnevin Cemetery many times. But we kept being told that they knew nothing. Eventually we found out from journalist that the re-burial had taken place. It happened at dawn

when no-one was around.'

'It just showed the nothingness of the poor, the nothingness of these women. For most of their lives, they had disappeared behind tall grey walls. They had lost their names. They were lost in the institutions of social control that were propping up a capitalist and patriarchal society'.

There never was a respectful service for the Magdalen women. There was no public ceremony to mark the ocean of sorrow.

There was no apology from an Irish Taoiseach for letting these women be interned in forced labour camps. Only now is the cover up beginning to unravel.

Illegal activity: No Death Certificates

In 1993, the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity received permission from the state to exhume 133 bodies.

But ten years later it has emerged that 22 extra bodies were found in the High Park convent site.

It has been illegal in Ireland for decades to bury anyone without a death certificate. In a modern state-regulated society, people cannot simply disappear. Deaths of individuals are

recorded, examined and sometimes subject to post-mortems.

But back in 1993, when Albert Reynolds was Taoiseach and Dick Spring was Tanaiste, something extremely unusual happened.

Undertakers stopped work and informed the Department of the Environment that 22 extra bodies—for which no records existed—had been found.

Instead of halting the proceedings and establishing even

a minimal investigation, the Department issued a special licence.

They did not inquire about the identities of the bodies or order any minimal investigation of the remains. They wanted the matter hushed up quickly, and quietly.

The horrible anonymity forced on the Magdalen women during their lives was continued after their death.

Something even more

unusual happened—the nuns ordered the bodies to be cremated. The Catholic Church has traditionally opposed cremations. Up to 20 years ago, it was forbidden outright under canon law. Even today, it is still frowned on.

Yet, by carrying out cremations, the nuns were in effect destroying any possibility of future identification—or any possible examination on the causes of death.

What they were hiding

THE Magdalen Laundries were punishment centres for women who offended Catholic so-called morality.

This morality was born after the famine when a property-owning farming class became terrified of illegitimate offspring. Just like the Taliban, they transmuted the hardship of rural life into a bitter suppression of most forms of sexuality.

The punishment for any sexually expressive woman was a life sentence under full control of the nuns. Stripped of their names, they were to become permanent penitents symbolically washing away the sins of their lives.

Mary Norris, a former Magdalen describes her feelings,

'I would have rather been down in the women's jail. At least, I would have got a sentence and I would know when I was leaving. It made me feel a horrible, dirty person all my life'

The women got up at 5 am, went to Mass, started work and went to bed at 7pm.

'That was it, That was our life. And we dare not ask questions. You'd have to hand-wash—scrub. You'd have no knuckles left. Ironing—you would be burnt. It was just hard work'.

Thousands of mainly poor women were abused. They were sometimes beaten. They were at all times under the total control of the church.

The fact that no record or no attempt was made to explain their deaths is a searing comment on how they were treated.

The Bishops are still holding on to their power

Bertie Ahern says that corruption is a thing of the past—belonging to the long distant Haughey era.

The Bishops say the child abuse and the terrorism against 'wayward women' also belongs to the past. Their message is to let things lie.

It is the classic strategy of every elite who wants to hold on to power.

The Catholic Bishops still

control the majority of the countries schools. They insist on Ethics committees in hospitals to impose their morality. They still use hidden networks to preserve their interests.

In the last week of the last FF-PD government, for example, Michael Woods signed a deal with the Conference of Religious in Ireland for the tax-payers to indemnify them

against claims on child abuse in return for a few million.

The power of the bishops has been weakened—but it has by no means been destroyed. Their recent attempt to stoke up prejudice against same-sex union shows that they have not the slightest embarrassment about still pronouncing on sexual matters—even after more than a decade of revela-

tions about clerical child abuse.

Unearthing the full story about activities of the Catholic Church in the past is an important part of the battle to weaken their continued control.

When glasnost or 'openness' was introduced in Russia by Gorbachev, one of the first protests that took place was a demand for a proper

memorial for the victims of Stalinism.

The protest movement eventually became so strong that it went far beyond the limits set by the reformists.

Ireland needs a similar movement to demand a public inquiry, a state apology and full compensation to the victims of Catholic clerical abuse.

WTO—WORLD TAKE OVER

What is the World Trade Organisation?

The World Trade Organisation's (WTO) Fifth Ministerial meeting takes place in Cancún, Mexico this September (10-14). In an unprecedented development in 1999, the 3rd Ministerial meeting in Seattle collapsed when thousands of protestors shut the event down.

Two years later, the WTO tried (unsuccessfully) to avoid protestors by meeting in Doha in the autocratic state of Qatar. This year, thousands of demonstrators are expected to gather in Mexico to protest.

The WTO was established in 1995 during the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Based in Switzerland, it is home to a series of trade agreements covering agriculture, public services, intellectual property rights and other issues never before included in international trade rules.

It has 146 member countries (another 32 nations have observer status) and holds its main ministerial conferences roughly every two years. Unlike other trade bodies, the WTO has the power to penalise any country breaking its rules with harsh sanctions and its rules take priority over all others—whether these are labour laws, environmental standards or basic human rights.

The Ministerial Summits are held in secret. Discussions are dominated by 'the Quad' (the EU, USA, Japan and Canada) who bring along thousands of advisors thus marginalising the smaller delegations from poorer countries. The Quad holds regular 'Green Room' mini-ministerials to fine-tune their own versions of the WTO agenda while Southern delegations wait outside in the hallways.



The Neo-Liberal Agenda: What they want at Cancún

THERE are big divisions between the US and the EU but they often unite to pursue policies, which means the opening up of all areas of life to corporate control.

Agriculture

At Cancun, the developed countries will promise to reduce their agricultural subsidies but they will also insist that developing countries open up their markets to the products of big western multinationals.

The reduction of subsidies—which mainly go to the big farmers—is often hypocritical. Since the Uruguay round, subsidies for agriculture in the OECD countries have doubled—even as those countries demand that developing countries slash their own subsidies. The UN has estimated that if rich nations opened their markets to the least developed countries, increased export opportunities would generate an estimated \$700 billion of additional trade for the developing world.

But US still wants the poorer countries to open up their markets immediately. 'Developing countries must remove their trade barriers regardless of what is happening in the developed countries' argues World Bank Chief Economist Nicholas Stern.

Investment

The US is pushing for a new agreement on investment to remove any

restriction on foreign investors. Until now some countries have rules, which say that foreign investors cannot own a certain proportion of telecommunications, or must have technology transfer agreements.

Under the new regime, these would all be illegal.

Martin Khor of Third World Network says that a new WTO agreement 'is designed to maximise foreign investors' rights while minimising the authority, rights and

policy space of governments and developing countries'.

The neo-liberals also want to extend the GATT agreement so that when a government wants to procure a service, it has to be open to global multina-

tionals. They want severe penalties when governments try to take industries back into public ownership.

In 1999, for example, Bolivia privatised Cochabamba water supply and handed it over to

Bechtel who raised prices. After riots, which killed several people, the government backed down and took over the industry again. They are now being sued for \$25 million by Bechtel under a little known bilateral invest-

ment treaty. The WTO wants to extend these types of protections for multinationals.

TRIPS

This is an agreement (TRIPS is short for Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights), which allows multinationals to patent anything—including life forms such as plants and animals for twenty years.

It was introduced to protect the drugs industry that does not want cheaper, generic drugs supplied to AIDS sufferers.

The US drug companies were forced to back down by public pressure but they are still trying to use the WTO to limit the use of generic drugs. They also want to extend their patenting system to knowledge of plants and seeds, which have been held for generations by indigenous peoples.

One US researcher has said, these patents 'can be likened to the difference between owning a lake and owning the chemical formula for water'.

If previous WTO agreements are anything to go by, then the Cancún negotiations spell disaster for people and planet alike.

The WTO's record exposes the myth

Since its launch in 1995, the WTO has hampered basic economic development in the world's poorest nations, while shoring up profits for western multinationals.

Despite the myth that free trade brings prosperity, wage inequality has increased with a 20-30 percent fall in wages in some Latin American countries. Trade liberalisation means that the 200 largest multinationals hold 28 percent of global trade but only employ 1 percent of the global workforce.

According to the World Bank, the numbers of people living on less than \$2 per day has risen by almost 50 percent since 1980, to 2.8 billion—almost half the world's population—and this is precisely the peri-

od that has been most heavily 'liberalised'.

On Human Rights:

The WTO's Dispute Court has insisted that actions based on environmental, humanitarian or human rights concerns are illegal if they obstruct free trade. For instance, when the State of Massachusetts implemented policies terminating purchasing contracts with firms involved with the Burmese military dictatorship, the EU and Japan brought the US to the WTO Court. This 'barrier to free trade' was declared illegal.

On Health:

This year, over 14 million people in developing

countries will die from infectious diseases. The TRIPS Agreement (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) raises the costs of medicines, by preventing countries making cheaper generic drugs to treat disease.

By contrast the US seems prepared to override patents at home in the case of patented antibiotics to treat anthrax. Industrial countries hold 97 percent of patents worldwide, and more than 80 percent of patents in developing countries.

Yet more than half of the world's most frequently prescribed drugs are derived from plants or synthetic copies of plant chemicals. It is estimated that if just a 2 percent royalty were

charged on genetic resources that had been developed by local innovators in the South, the North would owe many billions of dollars in unpaid royalties for medicinal plants.

TRIPS have also meant the privatisation of research and the transfer of patents to the private sector. In 1987, 50% of biotech patents were held by the public sector. In 1999, less than 10 percent were held by the public sector. 70 percent were held by the 'big 6'—Dow, Novartis, Aventis, Monsanto, Astra Zeneca & DuPont.

On Public Services:

The GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services) governs a total

of total of 160 public services covering everything from postal services to scientific research, education, heritage, transport, and water provision and rubbish collection.

The European Commission has noted that it is 'first and foremost an instrument for the benefit of business'.

Key players in the negotiation of GATS include business lobby groups like the European Services Forum and the US Council of Service Industries.

In Ireland, charges for refuse collection is just the beginning of the GATS project. Soon all of our public services could face privatisation and water will be first on the agenda.

What is the alternative?

SOCIALISTS are not opposed to global trade.

Few of us want to live in a localised world where we cannot sample the food, drink, music and culture of other countries.

However, we do believe that world trade should be organised around human need, not corporate greed.

The WTO is an organisation set up by, and run in the interests of, global capitalism. It

represents all that is wrong with the capitalist world that we live in.

Getting rid of it would be a major victory for the movement.

But simply replacing

it with a new clean trade organisation will do nothing to stop the inequalities and injustices of our world.

Instead we must continue to build the anti-capitalist movement and fight.

Another world is possible.

For more information on the WTO check out: www.wdm.org.uk, www.tradeobservatory.org and www.gatt.org (parody WTO site).

NINETY YEARS ON

by DAVID LYNCH

Fighting for our union

THE 1913 Lockout was the first set-piece class battle to take place in Ireland and for the months that the Dublin working class fought under the leadership of James Larkin it was the Lockout that gripped the political passions of the nation.

For the period of the Lockout the simple question “are you on the side of the workers or the bosses?” was posed everywhere and issues of class rather than nation were top of the agenda.

The drama of these months inspired poetry with WB Yeats penning lyrics in support of the workers and James Plunket later writing his classic novel ‘Strumpet City’ dealing with the effect of the lockout on the Dublin poor.

While many in the leadership of the modern Trade Union movement in Ireland may play lip service to the legacy of the Lockout and the militant trade unionist James Larkin, their policies are a complete reversal on the type of unions that Larkin wanted to create.

And the issue that sparked the Lockout of 1913 was something that would have a deep resonance with many workers toiling in modern Ireland, the fight for trade union recognition.

Conditions in Dublin’s crowded inner cities in late 1913 were appalling. Nearly 40 percent of the population lived in slums and infant mortality was the highest in Europe, many workers worked a 70-hour week.

In the two years prior to 1913 the newly formed The Irish Transport and General Workers Union (ITGWU) grew from 4,000 members to 22,000 by 1912 and sympathetic strikes had won wage rises for many workers. The union was led by the fiercely militant James Larkin who propounded the syndicalist desire to create ‘One Big Union’ to take on the bosses and to destroy capitalism.

Reacted

Much like today the bosses of 1913 reacted to this new found militancy and class consciousness with fear and they banded together in the Dublin Employers Federation.

Their leader was the William Martin Murphy. He was a type of major capitalist owner who would still be familiar today. A press magnate and owner of numerous other industries. He owned the *Irish Independent*, *Evening Herald*, and *Irish Catholic* newspapers, the Dublin Tramways Company and holder of big interests in hotel and drapery businesses.

On August 21st 1913 Murphy made his first move to break the ITGWU when nearly 200 men and boys in the parcels office of the Tramway Company received the following notice:—“As the directors understand that you are a member of the Irish Trans-

port Union, whose methods are disorganising the trade and business of the city, they do not further require your services. The parcels traffic will be temporarily suspended. If you are not a member of the union when traffic is resumed, your application for re-employment will be favourably considered “.

Early the next morning the members of the ITGWU struck back as trams around the city stopped and drivers and conductors walked from them. The first major sympathy strike of the Lockout.

Larkin announced that he would speak to a mass meeting in O’Connell Street on Sunday, August 28th, but the meeting was promptly banned. With typical gusto and bravery Larkin made it clear that he would make an appearance.

Disguised

A disguised Larkin spoke from a balcony window in the Imperial Hotel, ironically owned by William Martin Murphy, before being arrested. The RIC attacked Larkin’s supporters with a brutal baton charge. Men, women and children were felled and beaten as they lay in the street. Hundreds were admitted to hospitals that evening.

The brutality was repeated all over the city. One of the most scandalous incidents was a police attack on Corporation Buildings, in the city centre. James Nolan, a young union member, was beaten so badly that his skull was smashed in. John Byrne also lost his life at the hands of the RIC.

In an event such as the lockout the Dublin workers were to find out pretty quickly who was on their side. Those who supported the ITGWU and the locked out workers included the literary intelligentsia (Yeats, Pearse, AE Russell) and more importantly English trade unionists.

Sadly the workers were to find no support from the Catholic Church and much of nationalist Ireland including Arthur Griffith and the IRB.

The Catholic Church simply opposed Larkin style trade unionism and the strikers. Dr Walsh, Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, attacked a plan to take the children of Dublin strikers to stay with trade unionists in England.

Despite this the ITGWU carried on with their plan to house children in England for the period of the strike but as children were taken to the boats and trains, gangs of thugs led by priests and the Ancient Order of Hibernians attacked them.

Arthur Griffith, the leader of Sinn Fein, denounced the workers claiming, that “whatever causes the area of manufacturing to contract in Ireland dangerously affects the future as well as the present prosperity.”



■ Police arrest James Larkin

SOLIDARITY IN ENGLAND

THE response of trade unionists in Britain stood in stark contrast to many in ‘nationalist Ireland’. On September 16th railway workers in Liverpool began to black all traffic to Dublin.

Soon some 13,000 were locked out or on strike as far a field as Birmingham, Sheffield, Crewe and Derby. British workers paid for ships to bring thousands of boxes of food to Dublin—£150,000 was collected, a massive amount at the time.

While the rank and file of the British trade union movement showed solidarity the leadership of the unions tried to broker a deal with Murphy. The leaders of the TUC set out to undermine the Larkin strategy of sympathetic strikes and militant action.

They met on December 9th at a special conference and offered themselves as mediators. They allowed the transportation of scabs to Dublin.

Mainly because of the actions of the leadership of the

TUC the Dublin workers were forced back to work. On December 14th the ITGWU ordered a return to work of those workers who could. By January many had resigned from the union to get their jobs back.

A month later there were still 5,000 brave men and women sticking it out in circumstances of the direst poverty.

Disrupted

Although the ITGWU was not destroyed, it was severely disrupted and financially crippled. But the struggle forged a memory of militant class action that survives to this day.

While many in the leadership of the modern trade union movement will take part in the commemoration of this great struggle they fail to see the lasting significance of the leadership shown by Larkin in 1913.

Union recognition remains an important issue in modern Ireland, just ask the workers in Ryanair or Irish Rail or the

thousands of non-unionised workers in the multi-national sector in Ireland.

Rather than a softly-softly ‘professional’ approach taken by the modern trade unions what is needed is some of the militant muscle shown by Larkin and the Dublin workers in 1913.

Partnership

The present union leadership have been locked into the partnership arrangement for almost two decades now and instead of fighting, their ambition is to join the boards of companies after they retire.

They think their role in the economy is to be part of the ‘social partners’ and to attempt to organise the wider economy with the bosses. That is not their role.

Union leaders should set out to represent their workers and try to get the best deal possible for the men and women they lead, like Larkin did.

What is needed is for the rank and file of the modern

unions to take the lesson from Larkin and the Dublin workers of 1913 and bring some militancy and muscle to the Irish trade union movement. Voices from the Lockout “This is not a strike, it is a lock-out of the men who have been tyrannically treated by a most unscrupulous scoundrel. . We will demonstrate in O’Connell Street.

It is our street as well as William Martin Murphy’s. We are fighting for bread and butter. By the living God, if they want war, they can have it.” James Larkin August 22nd 1913. “Let the workers keep clear of the politicians who will simply use the workers as a means to their own security and comfort. Let others who may prate about ‘the rights and liberties common to all Irishmen’. We are out for the right to work and eat.” Notice for the formation of the first “red army in the world” the Irish Citizens Army in August 1913 established to protect the workers during the lockout.

comment

The Bard's Classes

by DAVE LORDAN

THE NAME Shakespeare may conjure up memories of the drudgery of enforced learning, and of plain bafflement at the unfamiliar language and grammar of the plays.

Why the hell have I got to study the rantings of this stinking English corpse and what in the name of jay-sus was he on about anyway?

Hubble bubble me arse, sir. Not surprisingly, classrooms full of bored teenagers find it hard to identify with the troubles and joys of neurotic dark-age nobles and devious Roman senators.

It doesn't help that Shakespeare's work has been obscured behind centuries of conservative academic hogwash. This long established critical orthodoxy saw the plays, and by extension, the man, as somehow suspended above the direct influence of their own time and place to represent 'eternal' truths and values.

But it is because Shakespeare's plays encapsulated so well the historical conflicts of Elizabethan London that they have remained relevant to audiences throughout the centuries and all over the world.

Shakespeare was no messenger from God. He was a man of the renaissance. The renaissance was the pre-revolutionary period in Europe between the 15th and 17th centuries when the ideas of the rising bourgeois class gained a controlling influence in culture.

Particularly important was the spread of literacy through the technology of the book among the middle classes. This made possible the widespread interchange of ideas and a public criticism of the old order.

The new way of thinking gave earthly explanations for earthly events, and placed the individual at the centre of perception and morality. It was the intellectual expression of the scientific and competitive logic of traders, manufacturers, merchants and imperial adventurers.

It challenged the old feudal ideology of the divinely appointed hereditary order and also the superstition and cruelty needed to keep that order in place.

Shakespeare's London was a place where the contending classes were not yet openly in conflict—though tensions were growing between them. Shakespeare comes down on the side of the new order, though not without qualifications.

Removed

Why then, you may ask, do we read about Cleopatra rather than Queen Elizabeth, Prospero and Othello rather than Walter Raleigh and Francis Drake?

Writing about places far removed in time and history from their own is an old trick of writers wishing to avoid censorship or worse. Shakespeare's London was a dangerous place. Many thousands lost their heads for speaking out.

Shakespeare had a family, lovers of both sexes and a legendary appetite for wine and oysters to fund. He depended for his livelihood on the patronage and good faith of the old ruling class and the money of the new rich. He had to be indirect.

Nevertheless Shakespeare's plays depict a ruling class which is constantly threatened with destruction from both internal and external forces.

His dukes and generals are cruel, self-obsessed, incest-ridden, murderous, greedy liars. They destroy themselves and each other in the quest for territory and power. (Sounds familiar?)

In contrast are the heroes and paramours who act under the power of love and individual conscience in making choices and taking action to challenge tradition.

For Shakespeare, love and conscience are revolutionary forces which throw the old order into turmoil.

Shakespeare also gives us glimpses of characters drawn from 'the mob', the nascent working class. These are used to show the dependency of the privileged on the blood and sweat of others.

For Shakespeare it is soldiers who win battles, not generals.

Shakespeare's plays often end a tad implausibly with the old order preparing to tick on under new management despite the recent upsets. Nothing has changed except the enriched perceptions of the survivors.

Partly this reflects the need to smooth the wrinkles of a well-heeled audience and partly the commonly-held belief that the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie could co-operate.

Not being a prophet, Shakespeare could not foresee that England would be in open warfare by 1640, twenty-four years after he died.

movie

Dealing and stealing in the US army

by KIERAN ALLEN

BUFFALO Soldiers was originally shown at the Toronto Film Festival on 10th September 2001 and was acquired by the distribution company Miramax but they did not release it until now because of their fears about insulting the US army after 11th September.

You can see why. The first advertising poster had the tag 'Steal All You Can Steal'. The film is about some of the 400,000 US soldiers who were stationed in Germany during the Cold War to stop the Russian Threat.

'War is hell—peace is boring' says the film's lead character Ray Ellwood played by Joaquin Phoenix. So he rips off the army storerooms to sell products on the black market and cooks heroin for the base's head of Military Police, Sergeant Saad.

Later he tries to sell \$5 million of weapons to criminal gangs but at this stage a new base sergeant Robert Lee is on his tail.

Robert Lee—appropriately named—is a 'real' soldier. A Vietnam vet who did three tours of duty, he is a psychopath who enjoys killing.

Buffalo Soldiers is not



■ 400,000 US soldiers were stationed in Germany during the Cold War

a searing indictment of the US military machine. It belongs to the satirical tradition of *Catch 22* and *M*A*S*H*. But it shows up the sheer waste and absurdity of army life.

Standing armies who were confined to barracks grew with the colonial tradition. In the past, anti-colonial fighters—including Ireland's former

Taoiseach Sean Lemass—advocated their dissolution and replacement by a people's militia.

Barracks

Confining soldiers to barracks, drilling them, playing silly war games, is a way for the officers to keep control. But that control can never be absolute

and as *Buffalo Soldiers* shows, all the tensions in US society—petty capitalism, the drug dealing and racist conflicts—was reflected through the army.

At one point in the film, soldiers are cooking heroin when the Berlin Wall collapses. They debate among themselves are they stationed in West

Germany or East Germany and if so what was the difference.

Instead of defending the 'free world' against the 'countries behind the Iron Curtain', the US army was irrelevant when masses of people took matters into their own hands. This is a good anti-military film that is worth seeing.

book

'Look Mommy, a baby maid!', Sexism, racism and globalisation

This latest book on the global exploitation of female migrant workers, *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, debunks the myth that women's liberation has been achieved. In 16 shocking essays, Ehrenreich and Hochschild expose the female underbelly of global capitalism.

From the fate of Burmese prostitutes to Mexican nannies, chapter after chapter brings the stories of the world's most invisible women to light and reveals that the latest commodity to be plundered from the Third World is not just coffee or oil, but human relations.

However, the book does not pit the Third World against the West. Nor does it blame all men for women's oppression.

Instead, Ehrenreich's fury is directed at an out-of-control capitalism that exploits every last ounce of whatever we have to sell, labour power, motherhood, sex and love.

She bemoans a feminist project left unfinished in the 1970s when a minority of women broke through the glass ceiling attaining positions of

by AOIFE BRESLIN

power and were happy to leave their 'sisters' behind.

Hers is a devastating feminist critique of the sexist world in which all domestic work is consigned to women in the first place.

Equaliser

She points to housework, the supposed great equaliser of women. Whether or not we work outside the home, at the end of the day we all do housework.

Thirty years after the supposed women's revolution, the average woman still performs two-thirds of whatever house-



■ Barbara Ehrenreich

work gets done, with an average of 7 hours a week spent cleaning alone.

However, for a minority of privileged women, that task can be now be passed on to the 'hired help' and the home, our 'haven in a heartless world', doubles as a sweatshop by day for immigrant cleaners and

nannies.

But the home is also where we raise our children, and they quickly learn that society sees some people as less worthy than others. In the US, where maids are mainly black, this means that rich kids grow up to believe that black means servant.

Ehrenreich cites one example where a little white girl in a supermarket trolley passing a little black girl exclaims: 'Oh, look Mommy, a baby maid!'

Regrettably, none of the essays mention the struggles and victories by immigrant cleaners in the United States to fight for better working conditions. Nor do the authors ask whether the nature of housework, childcare and human relationships would fundamentally change in a different society organised around human need.

Global Woman illustrates that life isn't *Sex & the City* and cries out for a new movement to fight for women's liberation. A movement this time that fights to win.

■ *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids And Sex Workers In The New Economy*, edited by Barbara Ehrenreich & Arlie Russell Hochschild, €12.90

Forum for Debate

FLUORIDE: Would you intentionally ingest poison in your water?

By MARTIN O'SULLIVAN
http://martin-osullivan.tripod.com

Fluoride, a by-product of the phosphate fertiliser industry, is being delivered to our homes every day. How did this material suddenly change from a toxic waist to a useful dietary supplement?

It would seem that some research was conducted in the 1950's on small samples of the population and a potential costly by-product suddenly became a very valuable commodity. Information on who funded this research is simply very hard to come by.

Why are we ingesting this substance when Belgium has banned fluoride supplements because research there concludes that excessive use of fluoride increases the risk of osteoporosis and could

damage the nervous system and is ineffective when taken orally.

Under the Health Act (fluoridation of water supplies) 1960 section 6, it is the Minister's duty to study the health effects of water fluoridation in fluoridated communities. In nearly 40 years of this mass medication in Ireland, there is not one health study and none planned.

Fluoridation of water supplies is a form of enforced medication (enforced medication can only be given to a person who is mentally ill). All medication is given under the supervision of a doctor. The reason for the doctor is so that changes of dosage, frequency and duration of the medicine can be tailored to individual physiology. This does not happen with fluoridation of water supplies. There are no measurements taken of how much fluoride is being ingested.

We have to ask have the

people who are selling this to the Irish people been indemnified so that when the true results of water fluoridation become apparent they will be able to pass the buck onto the Irish tax payer. This happened with some American companies which sold us blood.

The potential effects of water fluoridation are varied. Some are just cosmetic such as dental fluorosis, while others are potentially life taking such as cancer. Let us concentrate on dental fluorosis for a minute. This is the staining of the teeth caused by ingesting too much fluoride. This can make your teeth appear to have brown streaks on them.

We have all seen the new products, which are being advertised at present claiming to be able to remove these stains from your teeth. No doubt developed by the same companies who are selling the fluoride, to our governments. The adverts blame tea cof-

fee and other beverages for this staining of our teeth, but no mention of fluoride. All these beverages contain fluoride, as it is contained in the water supply.

There are adverts for water filters which you can purchase which will remove the fluoride from your water. Now this is just too much. Why should we pay taxes to a government who give money to companies who are selling us poison? Then we are asked to pay the same companies for the products to remove this poison.

All this product churning is just killing our planet. It starts off with the Phosphate fertiliser industry who produce fertiliser which does untold damage to our water sources. They then tell us that the water that we are drinking from these sources needs to have further chemicals added to it to make it healthy for us. We then see adverts on TV for products, which will

undo some of the damage that has been caused by these chemicals. All these products come in packaging which leads to further water pollution.

Don't take my word for all of this. There are experts in the dental and medical fields whose expertise on this subject far surpasses my own. If you would like to take a look at some of what they have written, checkout the following articles.

■ *Forum misleads the public* by Dr Don Mac Auley, Dental Surgeon, 3 Church Hill, Navan, Co Meath, <http://www.irishmedicalnews.ie/articles.asp?category=letter&articleid=2467>

■ *Fluoride A statement of concern*, by Paul Connert, PhD, <http://homepage.tinet.ie/~fluoridefree/overviews/connett.htm>

■ Or look at the Campaign for Fluoride Free Water, <http://www.fluoridefree.com>



■ 1950s research on toxic waste



Capitalism is wrecking the lives of millions and endangering the planet. A new society can only be constructed when the workers take control of the wealth and plan its production and distribution for human need and not profit.

REVOLUTION
The present system cannot be patched up or reformed. The courts, the army and police exist to defend the interests of the wealthy. To destroy capitalism, we need to remove the present state structures and create a workers' state based much greater political and economic democracy.

AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND WAR
War is a constant feature of capitalism today as the imperialist powers try to dominate the earth. Bush's "War on Terrorism" is a crude device to attack any country which threatens US military, strategic or economic

dominance.

END RACISM AND OPPRESSION
We oppose all forms of oppression and racism. This divides and weakens the working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women. We oppose immigration controls which are always racist.

FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH
We stand for workers unity against the Assembly politicians and Blair government. Like great socialist James Connolly, we believe that partition has brought about a 'carnival of reaction' We want to see an Irish workers republic where all workers gain. Our flag is neither green nor orange but red!

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY
To win socialism socialists need to organise in a revolutionary party. This party needs to argue against right-wing ideas and for overthrowing the system. We call for co-operation between left-wing parties and the formation of a strong socialist bloc. We stand for fighting trade unions and for independent rank and file action.

Marxist Forums

Big ideas discussed in informal settings



Ballymun:
The politics of James Connolly 7.30pm
Thursday Sept 11, Axis Centre Ballymun

Belfast Central:
Marxist Forum Liberia, Nigeria, Zimbabwe
How the west destroyed Africa
Wednesday 27th August 7.30pm
Cafe Arcadia (off Donegal st)

Blanchardstown:
Bush and Africa: Can Free Market End African Nightmare?
Wed Aug 27, 8.30pm
Castleknock Community Centre

Cabra-Stoneybatter:
From Resistance in Basra to the Hutton Enquiry
Tues Sept 2, Auchrim St Parish Centre

Dublin North City:
Chile 1973: The other 9/11
Thurs Sept 4, 8pm
The Snug, Dorset Street

Lucan:
Che Guevara and the Politics of Revolution
Wed Aug 27, 8pm
Fox Hunter Pub

Tallaght:
Plan Colombia: America's Proxy War, with Johnny

Connolly (brother of Niall Connolly of Colombia 3)
Wed Sept 3, 8pm
Tallaght Welfare Society

Waterford:
Is Human Nature a Barrier to Socialism?, speaker Dick Roche,
Thurs Sept 11, 8pm
Old Rogue

■ For details of other Marxist Forums contact (01) 872 2682

Anti War meetings

Rialto:
Tues Sept 9, 8pm
St Andrews Community Centre SCR

Clondalkin:
Thurs Sept 4, 8pm
Oak Field Lodge Hotel,
Speakers: Barry Brown (Irish Times) Kieran Allen (IAWM)

Ballyfermot:
Tues Sept 2, 8pm
Civic Centre,
Speakers: Barry Brown (Irish Times)

■ For details of other anti war meetings and activities contact:
Irish Anti War Movement 087 6329511
www.irishantiwar.org

SWP ACTIVISTS ARE ORGANISED IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS

I want to join the Socialist Workers Party

Name.....

Address.....

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Phone.....

Email.....

Union/College.....

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To join the Socialist Workers Party or for more information:
Fill in the form and Send to:
ROI: SWP PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, Phone (01) 872 2682
NI: SWP PO Box 143, Mallusk Road, Mallusk, Phone 0774 2531617
Email swp@clubi.ie Web: www.swp.ie

Shorts workers to vote on strike

THE pay dispute at Shorts in Belfast looks headed for a strike.

A few months ago, Bombardier, the multinational owners of Shorts, demanded that workers accept a four-year pay deal with a one-year pay freeze.

Workers rejected this deal, and instructed union officials to cease negotiations with Bombardier.

Despite the rejection, union officials returned to negotiations. These talks have since broken down.

‘Bombardier are completely intransigent,’ one

union official said. ‘They are determined to sack people and it now looks as if they are determined to provoke a strike.’

Bombardier is arguing that it needs to make the changes to ensure competitiveness, however ‘they are still making profits on the contracts we are working on,’ he said.

‘According to them it isn’t enough profit and that’s why they want to reduce the workforce.’

‘They usually release the profit figures in March or April,’ said a Shorts employee, ‘but this year the profits haven’t been

announced yet because the rumour is that they made over £30 million pounds.’

He said, ‘they are going

to sack people and then re-employ them on worse contracts than we are on at present. That’s the real agenda.’

Union officials are now looking at the possibility of balloting the workforce with regard to strike action.

Dairygold workers vow to fight back

WORKERS at the transport division of Dairygold have overwhelmingly agreed to resist attempts by management to contract out the transport fleet.

Management at Dairygold Co-op have stated that they intend to cut up to 2,000 jobs at the company.

SIPTU has not been consulted whatsoever about these plans.

150 of the 170 affected drivers turned up to a recent union meeting in Connolly Hall in Cork to air their views. They agreed to resist all attempts to force drivers to take redundancy and set up mini truck companies.

One speaker spoke of how drivers who deliver milk to Glanbia were left

broke after buying out their trucks. Others told of how drivers of a certain age were approached individually and asked if they were interested in setting up ‘mini-companies’ in an attempt to divide workers.

The meeting finished with agreement by all that there would be a united attempt to resist cuts with the only jobs to go being those approaching retirement.

Aer Rianta: We will not be privatised

AER Rianta workers are balloting for industrial action because of Seamus Brennan’s attempt to break up the company.

Aer Rianta has been described as the jewel in the crown of state companies. It has invested over 500 million euros in Dublin, Shannon and Cork airports in recent years and gave 300 million back to the state coffers.

It makes absolutely no sense to break up the company. But the Progressive Democrats, who have received substantial donations from Ryanair’s Michael O Leary, advocated the break-up on their last manifesto.

After the break-up, they know that Cork and Shannon airports will be in huge difficulties. The ending of the stopover at Shannon, for example, already means the loss of over 800,000 trans-Atlantic passengers.

These airports will then be more vulnerable to low-cost airline companies who will demand more contract staff and lower landing charges.

Similarly, Dublin airport will be saddled with huge debts and so will not be able to bid for the building of the second terminal. It has long been O Leary’s ambition to take control of this terminal.

All unions—SIPTU, TEEU, MANDATE and AMICUS are involved in the vote.

The decision to ballot came after top union officials put a forthright question to the Department of Transport: Would the jobs and conditions of the Aer Rianta employees be guaranteed after the company break-up?

They were told they could be given no guarantees.

Peter Dunne, a worker director at Aer Rianta spoke to *Socialist Worker*,

‘We were supposed to have consultation over the future of Aer Rianta but all we got were ultimatums. This agenda is being driven by top officials in the Department of Transport. They have treated the unions with contempt.’

‘They may think that Aer Rianta is going to be a sacrificial lamb. But the workers are not going to take this lying down. When the break-up was first announced, we stopped work to hold a mass meeting. The Department of Transport is going to get another rude awakening’.

POSTAL workers across the North are balloting on pay.

Nationally, postal workers have been offered a pathetic 4.5 percent pay rise over 18 months.

Any better pay offer is being linked to mass job cuts and ‘efficiencies’—which means even worse terms for the workers.

But postal workers are fed up with working their guts out for rubbish pay. People in every section of Royal Mail are already working flat out, they feel their backs are against the wall and they can’t give anymore.

One Derry postal worker told *Socialist Worker*: ‘We can’t give anymore—the cuts have gone to the bone already.’

‘And here in Derry, where 6,000 people applied for 200 low paid jobs in Debenhams, we have no right to let jobs like ours be lost forever.’

‘This is our chance to

hit back at management and say that we don’t want promises of jam tomorrow—we want a basic of £300 a week now, without strings and without job losses. We all need to vote yes in these ballots.’

Post Office chairman,

Allan Leighton, has been running around telling the press that he is a man of the people and that Royal Mail can’t afford any increase in wages.

But postal workers are not stupid. They don’t buy his insulting-to-their-intel-

ligence nonsense.

They want a £ 300 a week basic pay, without strings and job losses.

They know Leighton awarded himself a bonus of £165,000, Adam Crozier received a bonus of £57,000 and only last

month John Roberts, the former chief executive of Royal Mail was awarded a pension worth £3 million.

The workers are being told that Royal Mail needs to get back in profit—but Royal Mail’s UK mail operation made £66 million in profit for 2002-3.

Everyone expects the ballot to bring an overwhelming YES vote but there is a real fear that those at the top of the union will mess about and sell out those they were elected to represent.

However, it is pressure from the rank and file that won the ballot for action. It’s up to the rank and file to keep that pressure on the leadership and ensure that they don’t trade job cuts for more money.

Ballot papers go out from Wednesday 27th August. The ballot closes on Thursday 18 September.

The union executive changed the original ballot timetable in an attempt to make sure no legal challenge was possible from management.

Postal workers ballot for action

DUN LAOGHAIRE BATHS: Battle won but more to win

THE Save Our Seafront campaign in Dun Laoghaire scored a huge victory when they stopped the Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown Co Council selling off the historical public baths to private developers to build a 104-bedroom luxury hotel or a 19-storey office block.

However, the campaign is not resting. They know that the council is still planning how Carlisle Pier and other areas around the harbour can be handed over to private investors.

The campaign has drawn up an alternative plan for the area and have gotten thousands of signatures in its support. Their plan includes a public sea bath; an indoor heated element and children’s pool, facilities for sea-related treatments and maintenance of the existing façade.

They are now demanding that all local representatives respond to their plan and make public their views.

**PUBLIC MEETING
THE FUTURE OF DUN LAOGHAIRE BATHS
Thursday September 11th 8pm Kingston Hotel,
Dun Laoghaire.**

Greenstar: Waste industry does not want unions

FIVE workers at Greenstar in the Cookstown Industrial Estate in Dublin have been on strike for over 13 weeks in pursuit of union recognition.

The workers originally

took their case to the Labour Relations Commission but on the day of the hearing, the shop steward was sacked.

The pretext was an argument he had eighteen days previously, for which he had apologised.

The workers are

employed to pick up waste skips and run back loaders to pick up waste from commercial firms

Their strike has received virtually no publicity—but is an extremely important struggle in terms of the future of the private waste industry.

Greenstar is controlled by National Toll Roads who own 88 percent of the company. The company grew by developing close connections with public officials and by winning state contracts.

It was closely associated with the notorious Dublin

City Official George Redmond and won the contract of the West Link Bridge.

The company is moving in hard on the waste industries because it sees an agenda that links bin charges to privatised waste collection.

It has also forged linked

with Anglian Water—in the hope that waters services will also be privatised.

However, it is determined to break the union even before the process of privatisation gets underway. It originally tried to smash SIPTU on the toll booths but was beaten back.

Now it is determined to keep unions out of waste collection.

Union members should respond to this strike by organising collections and SIPTU should organise a day’s solidarity action on the toll booths to highlight what is happening.

**UNIONS
CALL OFF
CIE
ACTION**

THE decision to call off the stoppages in CIE is regrettable. Workers had built up a momentum and had won huge support through their no fares day.

The action forced Brennan to wobble in his desire to franchise out a quarter of Dublin’s bus fleet by January 1.

He has committed himself to talks from September 10th. No regulator or legislation is to be introduced in the Dail while the talks are going on.

All of this makes it is very difficult for Brennan to met his timetable of privatisation from January 1st.

One worrying sign, however, is that the unions have agreed to enter talks based on finding ‘a cost effective’ transport system.

Workers in CIE have already given a lot in productivity and the real problem is that the service is under-funded.

Rank and file workers will be watching for any sign that the union leaders are retreating from outright opposition to franchising out.

Socialist Worker

PAPER OF THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY €1.00 / £0.70p

inside:

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ON 1913:
FIGHTING
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OVERWHAT IS
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Thousands defy Council threats

‘WE STILL WON’T PAY THE BIN TAX!’



IN AUGUST, Dublin City Council sent out letters to nearly 40,000 people who were not paying bin charges.

They have threatened to use the courts, debt collection agencies and non-collection of refuse if the bin tax was not paid within fourteen days.

Workers and their families already contribute 80 percent of the total tax take to the exchequer.

They know the bin tax is simply another form of double taxation. But just as the water charges were beaten by mass resistance in the '90's, the bin charges are doomed to fail in Dublin.

Sean from Ballyfermot says ‘I will go to jail before I pay this.’

‘They must think that money grows on trees for working class people.’

‘Already this year they increased the charges by 33 percent and if they get away with this, we will end up paying for all our public services.’

Campaign activists across Dublin are responding to the Council's threats by distributing thousands of leaflets

and organising public meetings in every area. Over the next few weeks communities will be meeting to decide how to resist the threat of non-collection.

Brid Smith, the spokesperson for the Dublin Campaign Against the Bin Tax, said that there will be massive civil disobedience on the streets if the council stops collecting our refuse.

‘In the areas where we are well-organised, people are planning blockades of the bin trucks, mass dumping of rubbish and other forms of resistance.’

‘The mood is determined and the willingness to fight the government is growing despite the threats from the council.’

As Shay Ryan, bin tax activist from Ringsend said ‘They threaten working class people who have always paid their taxes with debt collectors.’

‘But nobody ever sent debt collectors after Charlie Haughey, Liam Lawlor or the Ansbacher crooks. We have to fight for justice in this country.’

Paddy Dodson, campaign activist from Ballyfermot

‘We are going to fight



■ ‘Binworkers will do whatever we can to help people fight this double tax’

this to the bitter end.

‘This government are walking all over working class people and we have had enough.’

‘In Ballyfermot people are responding to the Corpo's threats by joining our campaign in their hundreds. There's no way they will get away with double taxation here.’

Council workers too have been joining the campaign. They too know

that the bin charges are an unjust double taxation and are showing their opposition to the Council.

Pledged

Bin workers have pledged their support for the campaign and don't see themselves on the council's side in this fight.

Noel, a bin worker ‘It's a disgrace that we are being told to pay for this service.

‘They got rid of scores of bin workers by bringing in new technology so they must have saved a fortune.’

‘I will never pay the corpo to collect my rubbish and all the workers feel the same.’

‘We're 100 percent behind this campaign and will do whatever we can to help people fight this double tax.’

The key to winning this campaign is the resilience of working class people to fight and refuse to pay.

Dave Tyson, Finglas activist who was the first person brought to Court last year

‘We have to organise resistance to this. The Government are guilty of mismanaging funds but tell us we have to pay for it. Nobody should panic about these threats.’

‘The worst thing that can happen is you get a summons and then you're entitled to the same legal representation that I got which has been great.’

‘Everybody should join this campaign and help us fight as hard as we can. I'm prepared to go the whole way to Mountjoy if necessary.’

THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER:

1. What to do if you receive a court summons:

The Council are taking a small number of non-payers to court.

The summons will be delivered by registered post. If you are not expecting a registered letter you should refuse to sign for or take the letter.

If you receive a summons, contact the Campaign Against the Bin Tax immediately. The campaign will organise legal back-up for members. Don't be panicked by the threat of the courts—none of our members have had judgments made against them in Court.

2. What to do about debt collectors:

If these people come to your door looking for bin tax money, tell them you don't have it and they will go away—they cannot force you to pay.

3. What happens if they don't collect our bins?

This is where we have to get organised in every area and organise resistance at local level to resist them. Sign up your neighbours to the campaign.

Get along to a local meeting of the campaign. Discuss local tactics. For example, a blockade of bin lorries in the event of non-collection; dumping refuse in a nominated local place or organising volunteers to put it in the bin lorries.

To get in touch with the Campaign Against the Bin Tax call 087-9090166